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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [EAID](#) [TZ](#)  
SUBJECT: ZANZIBAR: AMBASSADOR GREEN DISCUSSES ZANZIBAR  
ECONOMY, PEMBAN ELDERS' PETITION WITH PRESIDENT KARUME

REF: A. DAR ES SALAAM 0444  
[1](#)B. DAR ES SALAAM 0261

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#### SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (SBU) President Amani Karume of Zanzibar told Ambassador Green in a recent meeting that he is ready at any time to discuss next steps to break the impasse between the ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) and the Civic United Front (CUF) in Zanzibar. Karume commented that law enforcement authorities may have "overreacted" in their brusque arrest and six day detention of seven Pemban elders who had signed a petition in April 2008 for Pemba's autonomy within the United Republic of Tanzania. In a wide ranging discussion on Zanzibar's economy, the effects of the electricity blackout that paralyzed Unguja Island for nearly three weeks in June 2008, and difficulties the Government of Zanzibar has faced in infrastructure development, the Ambassador laid the groundwork for a frank discussion with Karume on the necessity to take action and respond to opposition concerns in order to assure to avoid serious civil disturbances or violence in the run-up to or during Zanzibar's 2010 elections. End Summary

#### Tourism top income earner for Zanzibar

[1](#)2. (SBU) As the stalemate over the path to reconciliation and an equitable power-sharing agreement for a government of national unity in Zanzibar enters the fourth month, Ambassador Green met with President Amani Karume July 17. The Ambassador stressed the importance of tourism to Zanzibar's economy, noting that revenue from tourism has replaced the clove trade and other traditional trade activities as the number one income-earner for Zanzibar. He emphasized that Americans are particularly drawn to Zanzibar as much for its rich history and cultural diversity as for the two isles' pristine white sand beaches. Karume expressed the view that the United States and Zanzibar have both benefited from diversity and from an influx of immigrants from many continents. Such cultural blending brought artistic fruits such as jazz to the United States, and comparable levels of creativity to Zanzibar. Karume added that he had seen architecture similar to that of Stone Town during a tour of Charleston, South Carolina in May.

13. (SBU) President Karume thanked the Ambassador for the United States' programs and steady support in the health sector that has drastically reduced the instance of malaria on both isles of Zanzibar. He also commented on the fruitful discussion on July 2 with the delegation (NODEL) of three U.S. Members of Congress concerning the use of wind and solar power in Zanzibar. Karume said that back up, alternative sources of energy are critical in face of sharply rising oil prices. Thus reducing dependency on fossil fuels in energy generation should be a priority for Tanzania. He said that this was starkly evident during the prolonged 18-day blackout in early June in Stone Town and all of Unguja island due to subsequent damage from a severe short circuit in the Mainland to Zanzibar cable that supplies Unguja with electricity. (Note: Pemba Island is electrified by diesel generators and was not affected by the blackout.)

14. (SBU) The Ambassador pointed out that Unguja Island would benefit from a Millennium Challenge Corporation Compact (MCC) project that would lay a reliable underwater electric cable. In addition, the Embassy is looking for opportunities to attract more U.S. tourists to Zanzibar, for both historic tourism as well as the renowned beaches. In particular, the Ambassador is exploring how during President Kikwete's August 2008 official trip to Washington D.C. that Zanzibar's touristic opportunities could be highlighted.

#### Pemban elders' petition

15. (SBU) Ambassador Green told President Karume that during his April 5 visit to Pemba Island, he had a productive meeting with the regional commissioner and Members of the Zanzibar House of Representatives. In the afternoon, he had been approached briefly by four elders who later wrote and

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signed a petition requesting Pemba have its own government under the Union structure, thus creating a three rather than the current two government structure. However, the Ambassador told Karume he did not take that discussion seriously and had never even seen the petition. Karume commented that the way in which seven of the Pemban elders were treated after sending that petition on April 9 to the UN Development Program--i.e., arrested from their homes at midnight; held without communication and questioned for nearly six days, etc.-- was "unfortunate". All seven had been released on bail while a thorough investigation continues.

#### Karume willing to meet on reconciliation

16. (SBU) The Ambassador said he planned to return to Pemba in the near future to inaugurate two mosques in Micheweni that had been restored by a USG FY06 grant from the Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation and would notify the Zanzibar State House in advance of the date. Karume added that he had noticed the announcement during the visit of the NODEL that the Embassy had awarded a similar grant to the Kizimkazi mosque in southern Unguja. He welcomed these efforts to preserve Zanzibar's history, which also contributes to attracting more tourists. The Ambassador replied that continued peace and stability in Zanzibar is equally essential to keeping tourist levels high. He told President Karume he wanted to meet soon for a frank discussion on options and next steps in order to resolve the current stand-off between the two political parties in Zanzibar. President Karume said he would be ready to meet on these concerns at any time.

#### Comment

17. (SBU) President Karume's statement that he is ready to discuss reconciliation with the Ambassador should not be taken as proof of any change in Karume's opposition to powersharing. He has said to diplomats before that he supports reconciliation, but his definition of an acceptable

outcome is dramatically different than what CUF or the diplomatic community believes "reconciliation" requires: some form of powersharing before 2010.

18. (SBU) Through his discussions with the State House in Dar es Salaam, the Ambassador has realized that while President Kikwete has made the public promise to reconcile and reduce tensions in Zanzibar, Karume and his inner circle need to clearly understand the USG's strong concerns that substantial progress on reconciliation has to be made before the end of this year. Through an exchange of areas of mutual interest and cooperation at the July 17 meeting with Karume, the Ambassador is trying to lay the groundwork. He plans to meet again with President Karume within the next few weeks to stress the consequences to Zanzibar's economy should reconciliation not be achieved, including an increased probability that the run-up to the 2010 elections could generate an atmosphere of tension, or worse yet violence, in Unguja or in Pemba.

GREEN